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ER 86-5451X

OCA 86-3954

SUBJECT:

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

OCA 86-3954

3 DEC 1986

The Honorable Robert K. Dornan  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Dornan:

The Director has asked me to respond to your letter dated 20 November 1986 concerning the autobiographical story of Armando Valladares. Because the request for information concerns possible courses of action against Mr. Valladares in the United States, the Department of Justice is the appropriate agency to respond to this request.

Sincerely,

/s/ David D. Gries

David D. Gries  
Director of Congressional Affairs

Distribution:

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT****ROUTING SLIP**

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
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12	Compt				
13	D/OLL	X			
14	D/PAO		X		
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SUSPENSE		9 Dec 86 <small>Date</small>			

Remarks To 13: Please have response prepared for DCI signature.

*AY* Executive Secretary  
21 NOV 86  
Date

3637 (10-81)

**ROBERT K. DORNAN**  
38TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA



**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
ARMS CONTROL  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY  
AND SCIENCE  
AFRICA  
EUROPE, SOVIET UNION  
AND THE MIDDLE EAST  
HOUSE TASK FORCE ON  
MISSING IN ACTION  
PERMANENT OBSERVER TO  
GENEVA ARMS TALKS

## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives

November 20, 1986

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HISPANIC CAUCUS

TRADE AND TOURISM CAUCUS

TASK FORCE ON ECONOMIC POLICY

TASK FORCE ON CRIME AND NARCOTICS

EX-111 86-5451x
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The Honorable William Casey  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Casey:

I am sure that you are familiar with the inspiring book Against All Hope, the autobiographical story of Armando Valladares and his life as a prisoner in Fidel Castro's jails for 22 years.

While reading the book, I came across a reference to an American by the name of Herman F. Marks, who Valladares claims was the commander and official executioner at the La Cabana prison where he was held. Valladares goes into explicit detail about some of the atrocities committed against political prisoners by this American. He then states that Marks returned to the United States several years afterwards.

I find it unconscionable that an American could perform the most sadistic acts of torture and murder and then be allowed to return to the United States as if nothing had happened. I would like to know whether anything has been or is being done to bring Mr. Marks to justice. Is he still living in the United States? If so, are there any legal avenues that can be pursued to punish him for the brutal crimes he committed in Cuba?

Because of the excessive nature of his crimes, it is imperative that there be a full accounting of his actions. If an investigation has not already been started, I think that one should be. We must begin by finding out more about Mr. Marks' activities. This country was founded on the principle of human rights, and it would be a crime if we did nothing about a man -- an American no less -- who has so insidiously violated the most basic human rights, no matter where these violations occurred.



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I hope to hear from you soon about this matter and appreciate whatever action you decide to take. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert K. Dornan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert K. Dornan  
U.S. Congressman

P.S. I have enclosed a copy of the page in Against All Hope where Mr. Marks is mentioned.

cc Ronald Reagan  
Edward Meese  
William Webster

established a dictatorship which was a thousand times more vicious than the one he had helped to topple. So Castro sent him to jail, as he did so many other officers. But for the high-ranking officers Castro bore a special, almost sadistic, hatred. Moreover, Castro had a personal grudge against Carreras. Carreras had had a falling-out with Castro in the middle of the war because Carreras was unalterably opposed to Castro's appointment of a Communist, Ché Guevara, as head of the guerrilla front in El Escambray. When Ché penetrated into the rebel zone that Carreras controlled, Carreras was ready to kill him. Neither Castro nor Ché ever forgot that. Carreras and I talked frequently, because we lived in the same group of cots, and he told me he was certain he'd be sentenced to death for what had happened. Sure enough, Carreras was the next high-ranking officer shot after Commander Clodomiro Miranda.

Then they shot William Morgan. The leader of the firing squad was so angry with Morgan that he gave him several *coups de grace*. Even before that, but in Las Villas province, another commander of the guerrilla forces had fallen before the firing squad. This one, Porfirio Ramírez, president of the Student Federation of Central University, had fought right beside Castro.

Because of the constant firing squads the prison at La Cabaña had become the most terrible of all the jails. But added to that terror of death came another—the terror inspired in us by the early-morning “inspections.”

Captain Herman F. Marks, an American whom Fidel Castro had appointed head of the garrison of La Cabaña and official executioner, was the man who fired those *coups de grace* and carried out the inspections. When he was drunk, which he was very frequently, Marks would order the garrison to form up in full military gear and attack the prisoners. He called the prison his “private hunting reserve.” Another of his amusements was to stroll through the *galeras* and call out to those who were to be tried for offenses which carried the death penalty; he would ask them behind which ear they wanted the *coup de grace*. He had a dog he took with him to the executions so the dog could lap up the dead men's blood. Years later he returned to the United States.

For the inspections the platoon of soldiers, armed with wooden truncheons, chains, bayonets, and anything else they could use to beat us with, would erupt into the *galeras* shouting and striking out blindly. The order was that we prisoners were to come out of the cells the instant the cell doors were opened. But when the cell doors would be opened, the angry mob of soldiers would rush in like a whirlwind, meting out blows at random. Prisoners, also like a whirlwind, would be trying to get out into the prison yard, and so a knot of prisoners and guards beating them would form at the door, since we couldn't all fit through the door at the same time. We were

always in mortal terror of those inspections. We would be gripped by panic, desperation, and, worst of all, confusion—we would try to escape unharmed, but that was virtually impossible, since outside in the patio a double file of guards armed with rifles and fixed bayonets made sure that no one failed to receive his quota of blows and kicks.

Hundreds of prisoners ran or staggered out in all states of dress and undress, some even naked. When we were all out, they rushed us and began beating us with even more ferocity. The more the guards flailed and yelled at us, the more furious they became, their faces growing more and more horrible and deformed with hatred and sadism. Up on the roof a line of soldiers, including women, their rifles cradled in their arms, contemplated the spectacle. Among the soldiers up there was always a group of officers and civilians from the Political Police, and, of course, conspicuous, Captain Marks.

About three o'clock one morning in the days after my trial, which I will talk about in a moment, the cry of “Inspection!” woke us all up. Men were shouting the terrifying word from the *galeras* nearest the main gate. Almost instantly the prison yard filled with guards, but they didn't open the cell doors. That was strange—soldiers were just standing there before the bars. But when they opened the doors and gave the order to come out, on the double, the blows began. They did not go inside the *galeras*. They beat us outside. One of us, a seventy-eight-year-old man named Goicochea who could hardly walk, was pushed, fell to the ground, and fractured his thigh. But no one picked Goicochea up; no one even stopped to help him.

We ran around him, trying at the same time to dodge the soldiers' blows and not to trample him. We ran toward the front wall, where we always formed up under the yells of the guards armed with rifles and fixed bayonets waiting for us there. At that inspection, as at some others, platoons were present from the National Revolutionary Police, which collaborated with the garrison at La Cabaña. This time the inspection had a special purpose. Months before, the Revolutionary Government had begun a campaign to collect money to buy arms. Castro's own slogan at the beginning of 1959—“Arms? For what?”—had been utterly forgotten, and now the rage to arm Cuba was spreading over the land. The government had asked the people to contribute money and jewelry—rings, pendants, gold chains—to the defense coffers.

Because of the terror, anguish, and blind panic the inspections always gave me, I had forgotten to grab my watch when I ran out. I always hid it inside a shoe when I went to bed, but like everyone who possessed a watch I always took it out with me during these inspections. It was a matter of prudence—if you left it the soldiers would find it and “confiscate” it for sure. And if you dared to report the “loss,” the soldiers invariably took it as an accusation of thievery against themselves; the consequences to the prisoner